



5 Habits to Help Crush Cravings

plus 7 ways to manage cravings with healthier alternatives

Coach Tammy Lee | gofitlife.ca



You know that feeling, an intense urge to eat a sugary, salty, or fatty type of food. Just thinking about it makes you feel excited.

There are no hunger pangs, rumbly tummy, or fatigue, which are the natural hunger signs. Only an urge to fulfill a desire. These desires are called **cravings**, and they can pop up at any minute.

In this guide, you will discover what cravings are, why you have them, and how you can try to reduce or avoid them.

A woman with long braids is sitting at a table in a cafe, looking at a menu. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and cafe decor.

What Are Cravings?

Food cravings are a strong desire to eat sugary, salty, or fatty types of food, which often seem uncontrollable, leaving you unsatisfied until you get what you want.

Over 90% of the world's population experiences food cravings, and we all experience them differently.

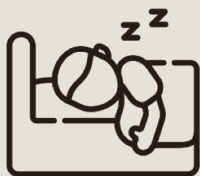
Studies have shown that men and women crave different kinds of food.

Men are more likely to crave savory foods like meat, fish, and eggs. If men do crave sweets, they typically go for sugar-sweetened beverages.

However, **women** crave mostly sweet foods like chocolate, cakes, and ice cream. The same studies have shown that women more frequently report experiencing cravings in their everyday lifestyle, not bound to food.

How To Beat Cravings

Some studies found that three key factors play a majority role in cravings:



Sleep

Sleep efficiency is often associated with craving sugar. Studies show that people with poor quality sleep increases the frequency of their cravings. Overcome this by preparing a bedtime routine focused on calming your mind for better sleep. Avoid caffeine after 3 pm and leave your phone in the living room or study overnight. Practice a bedtime wind-down such as breathing exercises or meditation.



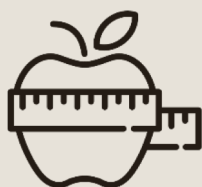
Stress

When you are stressed, it causes your adrenal glands to release the hormone cortisol, increasing your appetite and cravings. Take up journaling to help let go of the stress from the day. Set a specific time each evening to answer these three questions:

"I will let go of...".

"I am grateful for...".

"I will focus on...".



Dieting

Dieting is often to blame for causing cravings since you deny yourself specific foods. For example, when avoiding food rich in sugar, you tend to increase the cravings for sugary food. Improving the relationship with food through mindfulness may help control overeating, moving past restrictive diets.

Try These 5 Habits To Help Reduce Cravings:



Drink plenty of water:

Drink a big glass of cold water the next time you have cravings. It helps by hydrating the body and giving a sense of fullness.



Eat enough protein:

Studies have shown that a healthy diet rich in lean protein may help reduce cravings. The same research suggests that eating more protein helps suppress hunger and reduce ghrelin (a hormone related to appetite.) Start the morning with a high-protein breakfast to kickstart your day.



Avoid shopping when hungry:

It is almost a sure thing that you will experience food cravings if you enter the supermarket hungry. Why? – Because the salty, sugary, fatty foods are easily accessible and at eye level. Try shopping after you have eaten.



Brush your teeth after meals:

No evidence shows that brushing your teeth affects the hormones that regulate your appetite. But food does not taste good right after brushing your teeth. It helps extinguish the desire to fulfill a craving. Try brushing your teeth after meals.



Chew gum:

A study shows that chewing gum for 45 minutes can make you less hungry and avoid cravings.



Manage Your Cravings With These Healthier Alternatives

Special occasions, such as the Christmas holidays, are often celebrated with food.

We all know what that means:

More cravings for the super delicious high-calorie foods!

But how can you satisfy cravings during special occasions?

The good news is that there is always a healthier alternative to your sweet or salty food cravings.



7 Tips On How To Manage Carvings During Special Occasions

When you are craving something sweet like candy, pastries, or chocolate, try replacing it with:

Dark Chocolate: Dark chocolate (+70%) contains antioxidants and minerals and is often lower in sugar.

Applesauce Or Fresh Fruits: Eating a little applesauce when you have a sweet craving will help satisfy your needs. Applesauce is sweet due to the fruit sugar from the apples. Applesauce will provide you with great nutrients like fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants. The same thing goes for fresh fruits. Plus, fruits are low in calories and will keep you fuller longer.

Homemade Smoothie Ice Cream: Blend your favorite fruits with cottage cheese till it looks like a smoothie. Then freeze the mixture for 2-3 hours for a healthy protein smoothie ice cream that will satisfy any sweet tooth craving.

When you are craving something salty like potato chips, try replacing it with:

Popcorn: Air-popped popcorn is much lower in calories. Avoid adding butter or too much salt.

Hummus: Hummus is the perfect dip. Try dipping carrot sticks or sliced cucumbers in hummus.

Edamame And Nuts: Many nuts, and edamame beans, are packed with proteins and healthy fats. Apart from this, some are also rich in minerals like selenium and magnesium. They are a yummy healthier alternative to salty snacks.

Roasted Chickpeas: Chickpeas come packed with nutrients like proteins, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Try roasting them in a little extra virgin olive oil and season with garlic powder and paprika – **Delicious!**

Sources & Further Reading

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Food



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Lifestyle

